

**FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
PERSONNEL**

Personnel

Part 228 Insurance and Annuities

Chapter 4 Financial Planning Services

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4.1 What is the purpose of this chapter? This chapter establishes policy and procedures for us to reimburse employees for the costs of personal financial planning services.

4.2 What is the objective of the chapter? Our objective is to help employees plan for their retirement and make the best use of the benefit programs available to them.

4.3 What are the authorities for this chapter?

A. Federal Employees' Retirement System Act (Pub. L. 99-335).

B. Comptroller General Decision B-301721, General Accounting Office, January 16, 2004.

4.4 What is the scope of this chapter? This chapter applies to all permanent Service employees. Permanent employees include full-time, part-time, and permanent intermittent employees.

4.5 What are financial planning services? Financial planning services are advice and consultation services on investments, retirement issues, and benefit programs.

4.6 How much does the Service reimburse employees for and what are the requirements and limitations?

A. We reimburse 50 percent of a permanent employee's financial planning services expenses up to \$200 every 3 years.

B. Requirements and limitations:

(1) You must use a certified financial planner of your own choice to receive reimbursement. The Service does not endorse or recommend financial planning service providers, nor are we responsible for any decisions you make based on their advice.

(2) Employees may receive this benefit:

(a) Only once every 3 years.

(b) If retiring or voluntarily separating from the Service, within 12 months of retirement or separation we will reimburse employees for the benefit regardless of whether or not 3 years have passed since the last reimbursement. For example, if an employee receives a benefit in 2009 and then decides to retire in 2011, the employee may also receive the benefit in 2011. If the employee decides not to retire in 2011, then he/she must pay us back for the reimbursement.

(3) You must seek financial planning services during your own time.

4.7 How do employees obtain reimbursement? After you receive the services:

A. Complete the following forms:

(1) Application for Reimbursement of Financial Planning Services (FWS Form 3-2304),

(2) Certification of Usage (FWS Form 3-2305), and

(3) Report of Taxable Fringe Benefit (Financial Planning Services Reimbursement) (FWS Form 3-2306).

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B. Give these forms and proof of payment in full to your supervisor for approval. If you are using this benefit within 12 months of retirement or other voluntary separation, you must also give your supervisor a signed statement that includes your expected date of retirement/voluntary separation.

4.8 What do supervisors do with the documents they receive?

A. Supervisors review the documents and approve the reimbursement. They may decline to approve the reimbursement if:

- (1) The financial planner the employee used is not a certified planner,
- (2) There is no evidence the employee paid the financial planner, or
- (3) The supervisor knows that 3 years has not passed and the employee has not signed a statement indicating retirement/separation date.

B. After approval, supervisors must keep in employee files:

- (1) FWS Forms 3-2304 and 3-2305,
- (2) The original proofs of payment, and
- (3) Any written statements about retirement/voluntary separation.

C. Supervisors must send FWS Form 3-2306 to the National Business Center at the address on the form.

4.9 What happens if an employee falsifies information on the certification form? If you falsify information on the certification form, we may:

- A.** Exclude you from participating in the program without reimbursement for any expenses you already incurred,
- B.** Ask you to repay the Service for any reimbursements received, and
- C.** Take disciplinary action.

4.10 How does the Service pay reimbursements? We reimburse you in your regular salary payment. The amount we reimburse to you is a taxable benefit. We report it as taxable income to the Internal Revenue Service. We also compute associated assessments for Federal, FICA, Medicare, State, and local taxes.



DEPUTY DIRECTOR

Date: May 3, 2007